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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Tooru Horie

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24956

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EXAMINER

BLACK, LINH

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2163

DATE MAILED: 03/15/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/775,575	Applicant(s) HORIE ET AL.	
	Examiner LINH BLACK	Art Unit 2163	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 February 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 22-26, 29 and 30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 22-26, 29 and 30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

This communication is in response to the communication dated 2/6/06. Claims 22-26, 29-30 are pending in the application. Claims 22, 29-30 are independent claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 22-26, and 29-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Mikurak (USP 6671818).

Mikurak anticipated the independent claim 22 by the following:

an answer center for a service furnisher, said answer center furnishing information relating to techniques of components of a power plant to a user via a telecommunication network – fig. 53A; col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 157, lines 53-67; col. 159, lines 19-66.

Art Unit: 2163

a web server provided on said telecommunication network, a firewall for allowing a predetermined user to access said web server and preventing outsiders other than the predetermined user from accessing unjustly said web server – col. 106, lines 16-34; fig. 113, items 11406, 11402; col. 170, line 58 to col. 171, line 2; col. 172, lines 16-45.

wherein said web server has a web server for the user, that is accessed by a predetermined user and provided with an answer system for the user; a web server for the service furnisher, that is accessed by said answer center and provided with an answer system for the service furnisher – fig. 115, items 11500-11504; fig. 116; col. 77, lines 3-66; col. 268, line 41 to col. 269, line 19.

said answer system for the user and said answer system for the service furnisher each have inquiry information registering means for registering inquiry information relating to power plant component techniques sent from the predetermined user; an inquiry-history information registering means for registering the inquiry information and answer information to the inquiry information as inquiry-history information of the inquiry relating to power plant component techniques - col. 22, line 9 to col. 23, line 13; col. 77, lines 3-66; col. 128, lines 1-25; col. 129, lines 13-31; col. 157, lines 53-67; col. 159, lines 7-66; col. 79, lines 24-41; col. 158, lines 1-41.

said answer system for the user is further provided with a processing program for registering the inquiry information relating to power plant component techniques,

Art Unit: 2163

inputted by the predetermined user, into said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for the user, and a retrieving means constructed so that the predetermined user is able to retrieve the inquiry-history information relating to power plant component techniques, said inquiry-history information having been inquired by the user and registered in said inquiry-history information registering means of said answer system for the user – col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 158, lines 1-41; col. 128, lines 1-25; col. 220, lines 39-56.

said answer system for the service furnisher is further provided with a processing program for taking in periodically the inquiry information registered in said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for the user and registering the taken information into said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for the service furnisher - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 34, lines 12-35; col. 157, line 53 to col. 158, line 41; col. 160, lines 3-67; col. 268, lines 45-67.

communication means for communicating the inquiry information relating to the power plant component techniques and registered in said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for service furnisher to said answer center - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 159, line 19 to col. 160, line 67.

Art Unit: 2163

a firewall for preventing predetermined users from accessing said web server for the service furnisher - fig. 113, items 11406, 11402; col. 170, line 58 to col. 171, line 2; col. 172, lines 16-45; col. 260, lines 24-41.

means for inputting an answer responding to inquiry information relating to power plant component techniques and communicated to said answer center - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 77, lines 3-66.

answer sending means for sending the answer inputted by said input means to the user via the telecommunication network – col. 128, lines 1-25; col. 176, lines 1-29; col. 157, line 55 to col. 158, line 41.

Mikurak anticipated claim 23 by the following:

wherein said answer system for a user includes means for sending information including voice data and/or dynamic image data to the user - col. 48, lines 3-10; col. 106, lines 1-23.

Mikurak anticipated claim 24 by the following:

Art Unit: 2163

wherein said web server for the user receives inquiry information relating to the power plant component techniques from the predetermined user via an internet - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 171, line 30 to col. 172, line 44; col. 174, lines 45-57.

said web server for the service furnisher sends inquiry information relating to the power plant component techniques from the predetermined user to said answer center via Intranet – col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 77, lines 3-66; col. 172, lines 10-45; fig. 116.

said answer sending means has a mail server – col. 176, lines 1-29.

Mikurak anticipated claim 25 by the following:

a means for counting work hours of a professional staff which have corresponded with the inquiry sent from the user and reporting said work hours or charges calculated based on the work hours to said user – col. 47, lines 9-19; col. 53, lines 23-33.

Mikurak anticipated claim 26 by the following:

a translation system for translating an answer sent from said information service furnisher to said user - col. 33, lines 11-24; col. 45, lines 18-32; col. 74, lines 19-34.

Mikurak anticipated the independent claim 29 by the following:

Art Unit: 2163

an answer center for a service furnisher, said answer center furnishing information relating to techniques of components of a power plant to a user via a telecommunication network – fig. 53A; col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 157, lines 53-67; col. 159, lines 19-66.

a web server provided on said telecommunication network, a firewall for allowing a predetermined user to access said web server and preventing outsiders other than the predetermined user from accessing unjustly said web server – col. 106, lines 16-34; fig. 113, items 11406, 11402; col. 170, line 58 to col. 171, line 2; col. 172, lines 16-45.

wherein said web server is provided with an answer system for the user, that is accessed by a predetermined user, and an answer system for the service furnisher, that is accessed from said answer center – fig. 115, items 11500-11504; fig. 116; col. 77, lines 3-66; col. 268, line 41 to col. 269, line 19.

said answer system for the user and said answer system for the service furnisher each have inquiry information registering means for registering inquiry information relating to power plant component techniques sent from the predetermined user; an inquiry-history information registering means for registering the inquiry information and answer information to the inquiry information as inquiry-history information of the inquiry relating to power plant component techniques - col. 22, line 9 to col. 23, line 13; col. 34, lines 12-35; col. 77, lines 3-66; col. 128, lines 1-25; col. 129,

Art Unit: 2163

lines 13-31; col. 157, lines 53-67; col. 159, lines 7-66; col. 79, lines 24-41; col. 158, lines 1-41.

said answer system for the user is further provided with a processing program for registering the inquiry information relating to power plant component techniques, inputted by the predetermined user, into said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for the user, and a retrieving means constructed so that the predetermined user is able to retrieve the inquiry-history information relating to power plant component techniques, said inquiry-history information having been inquired by the user and registered in said inquiry-history information registering means of said answer system for the user – col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 158, lines 1-41; col. 128, lines 1-25; col. 220, lines 39-56.

said answer system for the service furnisher is further provided with a processing program for taking in periodically the inquiry information registered in said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for the user and registering the taken information into said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for the service furnisher - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 157, line 53 to col. 158, line 41; col. 160, lines 3-67; col. 268, lines 45-67.

communication means for communicating the inquiry information relating to the power plant component techniques and registered in said inquiry information registering

Art Unit: 2163

means of said answer system for service furnisher to said answer center - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 159, line 19 to col. 160, line 67.

means for inputting an answer responding to inquiry information relating to power plant component techniques and communicated to said answer center - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 77, lines 3-66.

answer sending means for sending the answer inputted by said input means to the user via the telecommunication network – col. 128, lines 1-25; col. 176, lines 1-29; col. 157, line 55 to col. 158, line 41.

Mikurak anticipated the independent claim 30 by the following:

an answer center for a service furnisher, said answer center furnishing information relating to techniques of components of a power plant to a user via a telecommunication network – fig. 53A; col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 157, lines 53-67; col. 159, lines 19-66.

a web server provided on said telecommunication network, a firewall for allowing a predetermined user to access said web server and preventing outsiders other than the predetermined user from accessing unjustly said web server – col. 106, lines 16-34; fig. 113, items 11406, 11402; col. 170, line 58 to col. 171, line 2; col. 172, lines 16-45.

Art Unit: 2163

wherein said web server has a web server for the user, that is accessed by a predetermined user via an Internet (said telecommunication network) and provided with an answer system for the user; a web server for the service furnisher, that is accessed by said answer center via an Intranet (said telecommunication network) and provided with an answer system for the service furnisher – fig. 115, items 11500-11504; fig. 116 (web servers, firewalls, internet, intranet); col. 77, lines 3-66; col. 268, line 41 to col. 269, line 19.

said answer system for the user and said answer system for the service furnisher each have inquiry information registering means for registering inquiry information relating to power plant component techniques sent from the predetermined user - col. 22, line 9 to col. 23, line 13; col. 77, lines 3-66; col. 128, lines 1-25; col. 129, lines 13-31; col. 157, lines 53-67; col. 159, lines 7-66; col. 79, lines 24-41; col. 158, lines 1-41.

said answer system for the user is further provided with a processing program for registering the inquiry information relating to power plant component techniques, inputted by the predetermined user, into said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for the user – col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 158, lines 1-41; col. 128, lines 1-25; col. 220, lines 39-56.

Art Unit: 2163

said answer system for the service furnisher is further provided with a processing program for taking in periodically the inquiry information registered in said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for the user and registering the taken information into said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for the service furnisher - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 34, lines 12-35; col. 157, line 53 to col. 158, line 41; col. 160, lines 3-67; col. 268, lines 45-67.

communication means for communicating the inquiry information relating to the power plant component techniques and registered in said inquiry information registering means of said answer system for service furnisher to said answer center - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 159, line 19 to col. 160, line 67.

a firewall for preventing predetermined users from accessing said web server for the service furnisher - fig. 113, items 11406, 11402; col. 170, line 58 to col. 171, line 2; col. 172, lines 16-45; col. 260, lines 24-41.

means for inputting an answer responding to inquiry information relating to power plant component techniques and communicated to said answer center - col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 77, lines 3-66.

Art Unit: 2163

answer sending means for sending the answer inputted by said input means to the user via the telecommunication network – col. 128, lines 1-25; col. 176, lines 1-29; col. 157, line 55 to col. 158, line 41.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 2/6/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Regarding to the Applicants' argument on page 13 of the Remarks about the limitation "techniques of components of a power plant", in the specification page 16, first paragraph that "components, such as turbines, generators, auxiliary machines, components in a feed water system, control devices, etc." The examiner finds that Mikurak teaches "while initially designed for use with an electric power utility, the invention is applicable in monitoring and controlling demand for other utilities such as gas or water, as well as for data services... The home monitoring and control network is located and operated within the power utility customer's home and includes electrical control, monitoring, and measurement devices which allow the utility to monitor electrical consumption in real time, ..., the IUU (intelligent utility unit) controls, communicates, and configures devices within the home network, and communicates information from the home network back to the utility central computer via the distribution system. The distribution network is configured in cells or small hubs which support 250-2000 users at a time." – col. 22, line 9 to col. 23, line 25. Mikurak also

Art Unit: 2163

teaches call center that support users' products – col. 157, line 54 to col. 158, line 41; col. 159, line 19 to col. 120, line 67.

Regarding the Applicants' argument on page 14 of the Remarks that "applicants have made clear the difference between Mikurak and the present invention by making clear provision of an answer system for a user and an answer system for a service furnisher between an Internet and an answer center by interposing a firewall." However, in the independent claims 22, 29-30, applicants claim that "an answer center for a service furnisher, said answer center furnishing information relating to techniques of components of a power plant to a user via a telecommunication network." Examiner finds that Mikurak teaches this limitation at – fig. 53A; col. 22, lines 9-61; col. 157, lines 53-67; col. 159, lines 19-66. The functions of an answer center for a service furnisher and an answer center for a user have the same function: "furnishing information relating to techniques of components of a power plant to a user via a telecommunication network". Mikurak also teaches firewall, internet and intranet - col. 77, lines 3-66; col. 268, line 41 to col. 269, line 19.

Regarding the Applicants' argument on page 14, second last paragraph that "the answer system for the user and the answer system for the service furnisher each are provided with inquiry information registering means separately. This concept is not disclosed by Mikurak." The examiner finds Mikurak teaches registration means for a user – col. 158, lines 1-41. In the specification, page 28, Applicants teach: "if the

Art Unit: 2163

regional inquiry-managing person 20 determines whether or not the creating of an answer to the inquiry needs opinions of members in a plurality of relevant sections, he registers the inquiry as a subject in the electric meeting room (step 024), and the conclusions of the meeting are made up as an answer to the inquiry (step 025)." Mikurak teaches: "the customer service support provides a single point of contact that is customer focused. This single point of contact provides technical expertise in resolving customer incidents, troubles and requests. Generally a three-tiered support structure is optimal for satisfying customer service needs. Each tier, or level, possesses an increasing level of skill, with tasks and responsibilities distributed accordingly. Such a structure is as follows: Tier 1--typically has a broad set of technical skills and is the first level of support to the customer. Typically this group is responsible for resolving 60-70 percent of the opened problems. Tier 2--are technical experts and field support personnel who may specialize in specific areas. Typically this group is responsible for resolving 30-40 percent of the opened problems. Tier 3--are considered solution experts and often consist of hardware vendors, software vendors or custom application development/maintenance teams (in-depth skills needed to investigate and resolve difficult problems within their area of expertise). They are the last resort for solving the most difficult problems. Typically this group is responsible for resolving 5 percent or fewer of the opened problems" – col. 34, lines 12-35. The Examiner finds that in Mikurak's teaching, the service furnisher/technician/engineer of tier 1, can post/register/raise difficult issues to engineers/technicians of higher levels for opinions/answers to users' difficult problems.

Regarding the Applicants' argument on page 14, last paragraph that "Therefore, a construction to periodically take inquiry information, received by the answer system for the user, into the answer system for the service furnisher also is not disclosed in Mikurak", the Examiner finds that Mikurak teaches "...when the customer inputs a question item which has not been stored yet, the input question is stored in a predetermined file. Then, after an answer to that question is obtained, the answer is stored together with the question as a set. Thereby, it is possible to update the database and inquiring screen image information at any point of time using the stored answer and question set. Therefore, it is possible to perform the updating operation when periodically updating general information. It is also possible to perform the updating operation immediately after the answer is obtained." – col. 160, lines 3-67.


Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to LINH BLACK whose telephone number is 571-272-4106. The examiner can normally be reached on 8am - 5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Don Wong can be reached on 571-272-1834. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.


Art Unit: 2163

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



LINH BLACK
Examiner
Art Unit 2163

March 7, 2006



Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2167